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Claims

Claims 1-13 canceled.

14. (Previously added) A method of inhibiting the preemergent growth of a plant in a medium that can support the growth thereof, comprising:

introducing into said medium a preemergent growth inhibiting amount of a growth inhibitor, said growth inhibitor comprising a lactic-acid-containing steep liquor to which additional lactic acid has been added, said steep liquor having preemergent growth inhibiting activity and said additional lactic acid having been added in an amount effective to enhance the preemergent growth inhibiting activity of said steep liquor.

15. (Previously added) A method according to claim 14, said steep liquor being corn steep liquor.

16. (Previously added) A method for preparing a preemergent herbicide for inhibiting the preemergent growth of a plant in a medium that can support the growth thereof, comprising:

providing a lactic-acid-containing steep liquor, said steep liquor having preemergent growth inhibiting activity, and

adding additional lactic acid to said steep liquor, said additional lactic acid being added in an amount effective to enhance the preemergent growth inhibiting activity of said steep liquor.

17. (Previously added) A method according to claim 16, said steep liquor being corn steep liquor.

18. (Previously added) A method according to claim 16, said lactic acid being added in the form of a fermentation product of a lactic-acid-producing bacterium.

19. (Previously added) A method of inhibiting the preemergent growth of a plant in a medium that can support the growth thereof, comprising:

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introducing into said medium a preemergent growth inhibiting amount of a growth inhibitor, said growth inhibitor comprising the deMan-Rosola-Sharpe medium to which lactic acid has been added in an amount effective to enhance the preemergent growth inhibiting activity of said medium.

20. (Previously added) A method for preparing a preemergent herbicide for inhibiting the preemergent growth of a plant in a medium that can support the growth thereof, comprising:

adding lactic acid to the deMan-Rosola-Sharpe medium in an amount effective to enhance the preemergent growth inhibiting activity of said medium.

21. (Previously added) A method of inhibiting the preemergent growth of a plant in a medium that can support the growth thereof, comprising:

introducing into said medium a preemergent growth inhibiting amount of a growth inhibitor, said growth inhibitor comprising the lactic acid bacterial fermentation product of the deMan-Rosola-Sharpe medium.

Claims 22-24 canceled.